

Supporting Organizations

- Affirmative Options
- Children's Law Center of Minnesota
- Family & Children's Services
- Hmong American Partnership
- Legal Services Advocacy Project
- Lutheran Social Services
- Mental Health Association of MN
- Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health
- Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
- Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies
- Minnesota Organization for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention
- Minnesota Psychology Association
- Minnesota Society for Clinical Social Work
- National Alliance on Mental Illness – MN
- National Association of Social Workers – MN
- State Advisory Council on Mental Health
- The Bridge for Youth
- District 202
- Evergreen House
- Freeport West
- Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Minnesota Youth Policy Alliance
- Youthlink
- Pillsbury United Communities
- Kulture Klub Collaborative
- Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association
- Catholic Charities-Office of Social Justice
- Outfront Minnesota
- The Depot Coffee House
- MN School Social Workers Association
- Avenues for Youth
- Rainbow Families
- Office for Justice
- Metro-wide Engagement on Shelter and Housing
- Minneapolis/ Hennepin County Commission to End Homelessness
- Minnesota Youth Service Association
- The Link
- Asian Media Access
- YMCA Point Northwest Teens Alone

Youth Moving Forward:

Working together to Ensure Stability, Opportunity, and Connection

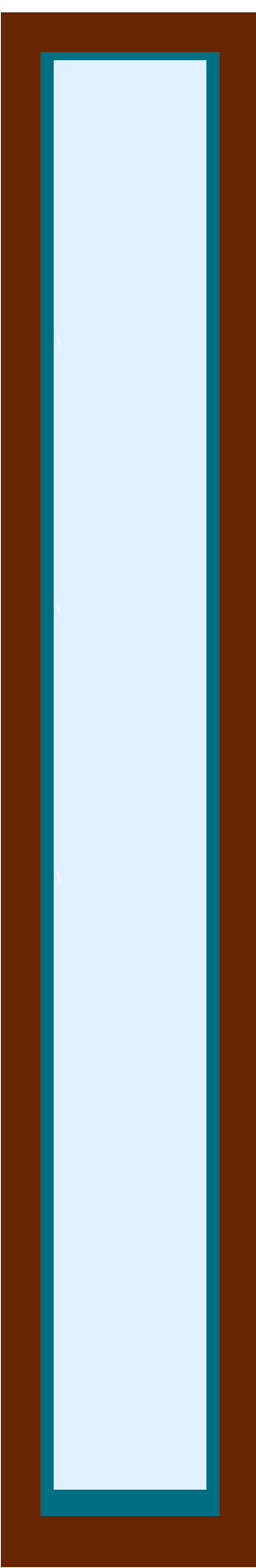
Youth Stories

Youth runaway or become homeless for many different reasons...

- **Roger** 15 from Ely was placed by social services with his aunt after his mother abandoned him because of mental health problems and couldn't live with his father because of alcoholism and unemployment. Roger and his aunt had such a terrible relationship that eventually Roger decided to run off and live with friends.
- 15-year old **Brittany**, from a town in central Minnesota ran away from home when she realized she was pregnant and wasn't sure which of her family members was the father.
- **Sarah** was 16 and a member of a family that were Amish from Central Minnesota. She had runaway from home and was living with a husband and wife that were formerly Amish and had now lived in Brainerd. They were not allowed contact with the Amish community any longer so there was no communication going on.

Runaway and homeless youth are more vulnerable to different kinds of abuse and being take advantage of than youth living with their parents or other supportive adults...

- **Roger's** aunt would say he was good for nothing just like his mother who abandoned him when he was 8 years old. He said when she was mad at him she would pull his ear call him a dumb a___.
- **Julia** 14 a homeless youth from the Iron Range arrived in downtown Minneapolis with only a backpack, knowing no one and with no place to stay. Within hours she was "befriended" by a couple who took her to Macy's and purchased a new wardrobe and makeup, and promised her a nice hotel. The only thing they wanted in exchange was for her to go "on a date" with their friend.
- **Emma** was a runaway youth who had hitched a ride with a trucker she met at the gas station there in Floodwood. In order to get the ride she had to touch him and let him touch her sexually when they pulled off the road on the way to Duluth.



Runaway and homeless youth are no more ready for adulthood than youth living with their families. Runaway and homeless youth need supportive services to help them transition to independence and adulthood...

- When **Roger** connected with Lutheran Social Service Family Resource Center in Virginia he had some toes which were frost bitten. The staff took Roger to the outpatient clinic for medical care. When they returned to the shelter he was fed and given some new clothes donated by local churches. He was able to reenroll in school. Counseling sessions were set up with his father who agreed to get treatment. He was eventually allowed to live with his uncle a different family than his sister.
- **Jen** was a homeless youth who I turned to local homeless youth agencies to help her put the pieces of her life back together. These organizations invested time and money in helping Jen realize her potential. They offered her skills and resources, giving her hope that her future could be better.
- **Jenny** a 19 year homeless youth began working with the Street Outreach program of Lutheran Social Services. Street Outreach connected Jenny with mental health services, and offered counsel on numerous occasions. They also helped her with filling out job applications, and looked into options for alternative housing.

With the appropriate supportive services runaway and homeless youth can get their lives back on track, re-unite with their families, and become independent contributing members of society...

- When last contacted in after care follow up, **Roger** was going to school and having trial overnight visits on weekends with his father.
- Once **Jen** got stabilized, she had a desire to give something back to the community that had supported her. She began working as a youth advocate at Lutheran Social Services, and was able to use the resources they had invested in her to work with homeless youth. Jen was also able to give back to the system as well by getting off welfare assistance, buying a home, paying taxes and volunteering.
- **Mark** is a young man from Duluth who was formerly homeless, but now holds 2 jobs and lives in an apartment.

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